

BOOK REVIEW OF *ELEANOR AND PARK*

WRITTEN BY RAINBOW ROWELL

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I. INTRODUCTION

According to Sudjiman (1986: 68), literature is oral or written work which has special characteristics, such as originality, artistry, and beauty of content and expressions. Literature is created by the imagination of a man. The imagination comes from the pictures of events and life which is then incarnated into words. Literature itself consists of some kinds, which are poetry, novel, short story and drama.

Eleanor and Park is a love story between Asian American boy and White American girl. Besides love story, it also deals with issues such as child abuse and bullying, which become interesting parts of the novel. Aside from reviewing the issues of child abuse and bullying, the writer also wants to discuss words that need extra references to understand them. Furthermore, the writer also wants to figure out the ending of this novel.

II. SUMMARY “ELEANOR AND PARK”

Eleanor is an American teenager with red curly hair. She is 16 years old. She comes from a broken family. Her parents get divorce, and her father leaves the house. On the other side, her mother decides to remarry a man named Richie who is too poor to build a family. Eleanor and her four young brothers and sisters are forced to move into a tiny house in which they have to sleep in one cramped room. Her step father is very grumpy. He does not like everything that Eleanor does. Eleanor also does not like him. She thinks that Richie is an alcoholic grumpy guy who does not love his family and is the person who brings Eleanor's family into miserable life. It makes her became an introvert, but she always tries to cheer up people around her. Eleanor does not only suffer in her family but also in her school, because she is not only a new kid at home, but also a new kid at school. She becomes the prime target for any bully, especially by Tina and Steve.

Park is a 16 years old boy. He is a half Korean from her mother and American from her father. His father wants Park to learn Taekwondo like his young brother Josh. Contrary to Eleanor, Park's family is a good family. His parents are so affectionate to their two sons. On the first day at new school, Eleanor gets into the bus and sees no one gives a seat for her, so she decides to stand. The bus driver tells her to sit down because there were many available seats. When Eleanor asks for a seat, no one would share the seat with her, instead she is mocked by her

friends on the bus. Finally, Park let her sit beside him, but they do not make any conversations.

After few days, Park realizes that Eleanor often watches him reading a book on the bus but he does not know how to start the conversation. Finally, Park gives some of his comic books to Eleanor to read. They start to talk to each other and commence the conversation. Park brings Eleanor a stack of comic books for her and also allows her to listen to music through his music player. After that, their friendship begins as they talk about their mutual love of music and comic books.

One day, After Taekwondo lesson, Park decides to come to Eleanor's house. Richie opens the door, and then Park takes Eleanor out that night. Richie gets angry when Eleanor comes back home. Her mother tries to convince her not to get involved with a boy because she thinks that it would enraged Richie. Next day, Park asks for an apology because what he did last night brings Eleanor to the trouble. Eleanor asks Park's number, so she can use her step-father's phone to call him. Park gives Eleanor his number. They talk on the phone that night and Park confesses his love to Eleanor.

Next day, when Eleanor and Park talk on the bus, they hear Steve mocking Eleanor with "Go Big Red!" Park gets angry at him because he always mocks Eleanor with that call. When they get out of the bus, Park tells Steve not to mock Eleanor, and suddenly he uses his taekwondo moves on Steve. He also asks him to stay away from Eleanor. After that, Park gets suspended from school because of his action. His parents get angry and believe that Eleanor gives a bad influence

on him. They also prohibit him to meet Eleanor, but it does not make Eleanor away from Park. Eleanor realizes that Park is the man who can protect her, and she believes that Park does not judge people from their cover.

In the last chapter of the novel, it is narrated that Eleanor gets home late that night, and she hears Richie's yell and her mother's cry. When she walks into her room, she notices that her comic books are ripped. Richie finds out Eleanor and Park's relationship. Eleanor realizes that she is in danger, so she decides to run away from her house, and walk over to Park's house. Eleanor tells him that she has to go to Minnesota where her uncle lives in. Park takes his father's car and asks for permission that he must take Eleanor away from his father. The next morning, they arrive at St. Paul, Minnesota. Park drops her off. Before leaving and saying goodbye, Park promises that he will send a letter for her. After Eleanor starts living with her uncle and aunt, none of Park's letters are read by Eleanor. She does not write him a letter for a long time. In the end, Eleanor writes him a letter, and it is a postcard with only three words.

III. REVIEW "ELEANOR AND PARK"

The Process how Park falls in love with Eleanor

The dominant aspect in this novel is the representation of love which does not depend on physical appearance. For example, Park loves Eleanor not because she is beautiful but she is a weird girl. As time goes by, Park

considers that Eleanor's uniqueness becomes her attraction. It can be seen from this quote:

The girl just looked like exactly the sort of person this would happen to. Not just new -- but big and awkward. With crazy hair, bright red on top of curly. And she was dressed like . . . like she wanted people to look at her. Or maybe like she didn't get what a mess she was. She had on a plaid shirt, a man's shirt, with half a dozen weird necklaces hanging around her neck and scarves wrapped around her wrists. She reminded park of scarecrow or one of the trouble dolls his mom kept on her dresser. Like something that wouldn't survive in the wild. (Rowell, 2013: 7)

The quotation shows that Park sees Eleanor wearing weird clothes, coming up into bus. Generally, as the new student at school, she should wear appropriate clothes, instead she wears "a plaid shirt, a man's shirt, with half a dozen weird necklaces hanging around her neck and scarves wrapped around her wrists." Those clothes are not appropriate to her. Park thinks that Eleanor wants everybody on the bus to look at her.

The next quotation also shows that Park loves Eleanor not because of her physical appearance:

"When he saw Eleanor walking toward him on Monday morning, Park wanted to run to her and sweep her up in his arms. Like some guy in the soap operas his mom watched. He hung onto his backpack to hold himself back. . . it was kind of wonderful" (Rowell, 2013: 171).

The quotation states that Park always wants Eleanor to be by his side. Parks thinks that Eleanor likes one of the characters of the opera who has good personality and wonderful life.

Another evidence that Park loves Eleanor not because of her physical appearance: “*Eleanor was right. She never looked nice. She looked like art, and art wasn’t supposed to look nice; it was supposed to make you feel something*” (Rowell, 2013: 168). From the quotation, it shows that Park imagines that Eleanor’s weirdness is like an art. He thinks that Eleanor exists to be loved. She has good personality inside her that, so that Park feels love to her. From this quotation the writer realizes that this quote from the author proves that love does not only come from what we see, but from what we feel as well.

Beside her physical Appearance Park’s love to Eleanor also come from her like in music. As a teenager, Park’s hobby is listening to music. Both of them also have the same style of music. It can be seen from the quotation below:

She looked up at his face, even though she knew ow that was going to feel, like someone was hooking her insides out through her chest. No. it was awesome. I didn’t want to stop listening. That one song – is it “Love Will Tear us Apart”?’ Yeah, Joy Division.’

Oh my God, that’s the best beginning to a song ever.’

He imitated the guitar and the drums.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, she said. I just wanted to listen to those three seconds over and over. (Rowell, 2013: 59)

The quotation states that Park is very happy, because he finds someone who loves same music as him. Music is also the first case in which they become close to each other. It also can be seen in the cover of the book. The cover of the book shows Park and Eleanor listen music from the same tape.

The Ending of The Story

The writer also wants to discuss the ending of the story. The readers who want to read this novel are expecting a happy ending, because Eleanor and Park are young teenagers who deserve to be happy. Moreover, the readers expect a happy ending because *Eleanor and Park* is the novel about love

Eleanor didn't go prom with him. Cat did, cat from work. She was thin and dark, and her eyes were as blue and flat as breath mints. When park held Cat's hand, it was like holding hands with the mannequin, and it was such a relief that he kissed her. ... He sat up. He smiled. Something heavy and winged took off from his chest. Eleanor hadn't written him a letter, it was a postcard. Just three words long. (Rowell, 2013: 325)

From the quotation above, it is said that Eleanor sends him a three words long postcard. The three words can be something good or bad. However, the three words can be bad things. The bad things come from the both main characters. This proves that Park really loves Eleanor so much, but the three words show how absurd their relationship is

IV. CONCLUSION

Eleanor and Park is a novel written by Rainbow Rowell. It presents a love story between Asian American and White American. It deals with issues of child abuses and bullies towards Eleanor because she has big body and red curly hair. This novel also tells how the two main characters struggle through the hard ways to reach their love. It deals with Park's fighting with Steve and the differences between Eleanor and Park's family.

The novel has important values which can be learned. It is about loves. The main character, Park Sheridan, does not see Eleanor from her appearance but from her personality. For the novel itself, *Eleanor and Park* is a good example of showing unconditional love because it teaches us how to respect people and not to judge people by physical appearance. Nevertheless, this novel contains some negative values, such as the slang words which come from the mockeries. Therefore, the readers must be able to determine which values are good or which values are bad to be applied in real life.